



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

**Information received from Ethiopia on follow-up to the
concluding observations on its eighth periodic report***

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Background

1. The Government of Ethiopia has submitted the Eighth Periodic Report to the Committee on the Convention of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in November, 2017. The Committee examined the report in its 72nd Session held in March 2019 and forwarded its concluding observations and recommendations to Ethiopia thereafter. The GoE has been taking different measures to ensure the implementation of the CEDAW Concluding Observations. One of the steps has been the translation of the concluding observations into Amharic, the working language of the country. The translated documents have been disseminated to all relevant actors at federal and regional level to include into their plans and activities. In addition, an action plan containing the relevant stakeholders, the status of implementation and timeline has also been prepared by the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth.

2. As indicated in the 8th Periodic Report, additional information subsequent to the report and the dialogue with the CEDAW Committee, Ethiopia has been undergoing political and economic transformations which have had a positive impact on the situation of women and girls in Ethiopia. These include the progress in bringing women's participation in leadership and decision-making such as gender parity in the cabinet and women appointed at the highest level of government office including the FDRE President; the revision of the Civil Society Proclamation which has allowed more women's organizations to actively take part in women's rights work and issuance of a 10 Years Development Plan which has Gender and Social Inclusion as one its pillars.

3. Despite these developments, there were also challenges which the government is working on addressing. The COVID-19 pandemic presented hardship to countries all across the world since it has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization in January, 2020. Evidence has shown that the pandemic's impact has been disproportionately harsh on women and girls through loss of jobs and income generating opportunities, increased burden of domestic and care responsibilities and higher prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) and Harmful traditional practices. There have also been women affected by conflict and displacement across the country including being victims of violence. The government is taking appropriate measures for the prevention and response to SGBV and rehabilitation of survivors of violence and to support women who are facing economic hardships.

4. With this background, this document presents the written responses to the Committee's Concluding Observations requesting update on the particular recommendations contained in paragraphs 22(a) and (b) and 24(a) and (b).

Regarding the recommendation on ensuring adequate implementation of the revised penalties for FGM under the criminal code

5. In order to ensure the adequate implementation of the penalties provided for FGM under the 2005 Criminal code, the Office of the Federal Attorney General has provided capacity building trainings on the laws related to FGM to the justice sector professionals in different regional states. This training especially focused on regions where the prevalence of FGM/C is higher such as Afar and Somali Regional States.

Regarding the recommendation on effective implementation of the national strategy and action plan on harmful traditional practices against women and children

6. The FDRE Ministry of Women, Children and Youth has developed a National Costed Roadmap to End Child Marriage and FGM/C, the two widely practiced HTPs with serious consequences on women and girls in order to effectively implement the national strategy on HTPs. The Multi-sectoral Costed roadmap which was officially launched in 2019 includes clear strategies to eliminate the child marriage and FGM, the costs required to put the strategies into action as well as the role and responsibilities of government, CSOs, religious and community organizations, non-governmental organizations and the media. The national roadmap has been rollout in all regions and city administrations with all stakeholders aligning their planning and activities with the roadmap. Government line ministries such as health, education, FAG have also started including activities related to HTPs in their plans for the success of the multi-sectoral response.

7. Considering the critical role religious leaders play to combat harmful traditional practices, the ministry has been working with the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia and has so far succeeded in religious leaders in seven out of the eight denominations in the country banning the practices of the HTPs which affect women and children and officially declaring their followers should not practice FGM and Child Marriage. Efforts are underway for the remaining religious leaders in the Muslim faith to make similar declaration. In this regard, the Islamic Affairs Council of the Somali Regional State where FGM/C is most prevalent is in the process of meeting to pass a Fatwa against FGM.

8. There has been more focus given to community mobilization and different media campaigns have been rolled out to raise the awareness of the community and prevent HTPs. There were also efforts to capacitate women's association to advocate for the rights of women and involve in the prevention of the HTPs. A social norm change manual also been prepared and rolled out for all regional states and non-governmental actors working on HTPs.

9. At the federal level, the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM/C has been coordinating the efforts of prevention and response to HTPs and brings together stakeholders from government, CSOs, Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and international organizations working on HTPs for joint action. There are also similar networks at regional and lower administrative structures. The national alliance in collaboration with development partners has been strengthening these networks through continuous capacity building trainings and hiring coordinators in four regions (Afar, Somali, Oromia and Amhara) to facilitate the work.

10. As reported in the 8th Periodic Report, data on HTPs specially on child marriage and FGM/C was collected through the Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS), 2016. A further analysis of the findings of the survey was conducted which indicated gaps in data that need to be addressed in the subsequent EDHS (2021). Accordingly, an assessment focused on HTPs indicating gaps has been prepared for the Central Statistics Agency and the Ministry of Health to take up.

11. A tool to verify community readiness to abandon HTPs has been prepared and is in the process of rollout. The tool is aimed at gauging the readiness of Kebeles and Woredas (administrative structures) to eliminate child marriage and FGM/C during the implementation of the National Roadmap on Child Marriage and FGM/C in order to set a baseline for progress.

12. During the COVID-19 pandemic, HTPs have remained a top priority for the Government of Ethiopia. Although Ethiopia has not instituted a lockdown, school

closures for the majority of 2020 has put girls at risk of HTPs. The ministry, regional bureaus and non-governmental actors have given focus to the issue and it was possible to protect girls from HTPs including for example the cancellation of more than a thousand child marriages in Amhara regional state.

Regarding the recommendation for Ethiopia to adopt a comprehensive and inclusive law on gender-based violence that addresses all forms of violence against women

13. Different professionals and human rights advocates in Ethiopia have been stating that the existing laws on violence against women and children are not sufficient enough to protect women and children and emphasizing the need for comprehensive and inclusive laws. Taking these and the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee, an in-depth assessment has been conducted to identify the gaps in the laws of Ethiopia and to determine whether there is a need for comprehensive legislation regarding the subject. The outcome of the assessment is now at the final stage of validation by different stakeholders. Ethiopia has also accepted in 2019 under the UPR process a recommendation which requests the adoption of comprehensive and inclusive law regarding gender-based violence.

14. It is important to also note that the 10 Years Development Plan (2020–2030) of the country and the sector specific plan of the MoWCY, has also focused on the elimination of violence against women and girls and aims to introduce initiatives aimed at protecting women and girls from violence. These include the establishment of the National Sex Offenders’ Registration System and special police task-forces dedicated to preventing GBV.

Regarding the Committee’s recommendation for the amendment of the Criminal Code of 2005 in order to increase the penalties of provisions of the Code related to FGM (Articles 561, 562, 567, 569 and 570, repealing article 563, criminalizing marital rape, including providing a clear provision concerning domestic violence and other gaps of the Criminal Code

15. The in-depth assessment on the gaps of the laws of Ethiopia including the Criminal Code which is mentioned above is expected to address, among other things, those gaps identified by the Committee. After consultation and careful examination of the gaps, and line with the recommendations accepted by Ethiopia under the UPR process, in addition to adopting a comprehensive legislation, the penalties which have been laid to the offences mentioned above will be reconsidered and changes will be made as necessary.